

IN THE CLAIMS

Please replace all prior claim versions, and claim listings with the Claims Listing below.

1. (Previously presented) A floatation swimsuit comprising:

a form-fitting torso covering, said form-fitting torso covering including a retaining pocket, a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a left leg covering, and a right leg covering;

a unitary floatation element for retention by said retaining pocket, said unitary floatation element including:

a backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material having a thickness within a first predetermined range for providing general buoyancy to a wearer, said backsheet including an inner surface for presentation toward a wearer and an outer surface for presentation away from a wearer; and

a plurality of raised portions integrally carried by said backsheet in fixed relative positions for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, each of said raised portions comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said backsheet and each of said raised portions extending outwardly from said outer surface of said backsheet;

and wherein said buoyant material includes a plurality of flexion channels on one side and at least one of said flexion channels does not correspond with portions of said buoyant material defined between said plurality of raised portions extending outwardly from another side of said buoyant material.

2. (Original) The floatation swimsuit of Claim 1, wherein said retaining pocket includes a sheet of fabric, said sheet of fabric being laminated to the outwardly disposed surface of said unitary floatation element to ensure that said fabric sheet closely matches the contours of said backsheet and enhanced buoyancy regions of said unitary floatation element.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The floatation swimsuit of Claim 1, wherein said plurality of raised portions include an upper torso portion and a lower torso portion.

5. (Previously presented) A unitary floatation element for use in a floatation swimsuit, said floatation element comprising:

a backsheet contained within a torso covering including a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a left leg covering, and a right leg covering, said backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material having a thickness within a first predetermined range for providing general buoyancy to a wearer, said backsheet including an inner surface for presentation toward a wearer and an outer surface for presentation away from a wearer;

a plurality of raised portions integrally carried by said backsheet in fixed relative positions for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, each of said raised portions comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said backsheet and each of said raised portions extending outwardly from said outer surface of said backsheet;

and wherein said buoyant material includes a plurality of flexion channels on said inner surface of said buoyant material one side and at least one of said flexion channels does not correspond with portions of said buoyant material defined between said plurality of raised portions extending outwardly from another side of said buoyant material.

6. (Original) The floatation swimsuit of Claim 5, wherein said plurality of raised portions include an upper torso portion and a lower torso portion.

7. (Previously Presented) A floatation swimsuit comprising:

a form-fitting torso covering including a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a left leg covering, and a right leg covering, said form-fitting torso covering including a distributed layer of buoyant material distributed substantially throughout for providing general buoyancy to the

wearer, said distributed layer of buoyant material having a thickness in a first particular range;
and

a plurality of enhanced buoyancy regions integrally carried by said distributed layer of buoyant material in fixed positions for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, each of said enhanced buoyancy regions comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said distributed layer of buoyant material and extending outwardly therefrom;

and wherein said buoyant material includes a plurality of flexion channels on one side and at least one of said flexion channels does not correspond with portions of said buoyant material defined between said plurality of enhanced buoyancy regions extending outwardly from another side of said buoyant material.

8. (Previously presented) The floatation swimsuit of Claim 7, wherein said plurality of enhanced buoyancy regions include an upper torso portion and a lower torso portion.

9. (Original) The floatation swimsuit of claim 7, further comprising a fastenable torso opening.

Claims 10-12 (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a floatation swimsuit comprising the steps of:

providing a form-fitting torso covering having an element retaining pocket, a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a left leg covering, and a right leg covering;

providing a unitary floatation element having a backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material having a thickness within a first predetermined range and a plurality of raised portions integrally carried by said backsheet for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, said unitary floatation element further comprising at least one flexion channel for presentation toward the swimsuit wearer;

misaligning said flexion channel with portions of said buoyant material between said raised portions such that said flexion channel does not correspond with said portions of said buoyant material between said plurality of raised portions;

positioning said unitary floatation element at a desired location adjacent said form-fitting torso covering; and

securing said unitary floatation element within said element retaining pocket.

14. (Currently Amended) A floatation swimsuit comprising:

a form-fitting torso covering, said form-fitting torso covering including a retaining pocket;

a unitary floatation element for retention by said retaining pocket, said unitary floatation element including:

a backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material having a thickness within a first predetermined range for providing general buoyancy to a wearer, said backsheet including an inner surface for presentation toward a wearer and an outer surface for presentation away from a wearer, said backsheet further comprising at least one flexion channel on said inner surface for providing flexibility; and

a plurality of raised portions integrally carried by said backsheet in fixed relative positions for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, each of said raised portions comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said backsheet and each of said raised portions extending outwardly from said outer surface of said backsheet;

wherein said plurality of raised portions include an upper torso portion and a lower torso portion and said retaining pocket includes a sheet of fabric, said sheet of fabric being laminated to the outwardly disposed surface of said unitary floatation element to ensure that said fabric sheet closely matches the contours of said backsheet and enhanced buoyancy regions of said unitary floatation element, and

and wherein said flexion channel on said inner surface of said backsheet does not correspond with portions of said buoyant material defined between said plurality of raised portions extending outwardly from said outer surface of said backsheet.

15. (Allowed) A floatation swimsuit comprising:

a form-fitting torso covering, said form-fitting torso covering including a retaining pocket;

a unitary floatation element for retention by said retaining pocket, said unitary floatation element including:

a backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material having a thickness within a first predetermined range for providing general buoyancy to a wearer, said backsheet including an inner surface for presentation toward a wearer and an outer surface for presentation away from a wearer; and

a plurality of raised portions integrally carried by said backsheet in fixed relative positions for providing enhanced buoyancy to strategically selected areas of the wearer's body, each of said raised portions comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said backsheet and each of said raised portions extending outwardly from said outer surface of said backsheet;

wherein said retaining pocket includes a sheet of fabric having an indicator dye which bleaches upon exposure to the elements to notify the wearer of degradation of the swimsuit components.

Claims 16-18 (Canceled).

19. (New) A floatation swimsuit, comprising:

a form-fitting torso covering, said form-fitting torso covering including a retaining pocket; and

a unitary flotation element for retention by said retaining pocket, said unitary flotation element comprising:

a backsheet comprising a layer of buoyant material of a primary thickness within a first predetermine range, said buoyant material distributed substantially throughout the retaining pocket to provide general buoyancy about a wearer's torso,

and at least one enhanced buoyancy region integrally carried by said backsheet of buoyant material to provide enhanced buoyancy to a strategically selected portion of the wearer's torso relative to the general buoyancy provided by the buoyant material of primary thickness to the user's torso, said at least one enhanced buoyancy region comprising a buoyant material having a thickness substantially greater than that of said primary thickness and extending outwardly therefrom.

20. (New) The flotation swimsuit of claim 19, wherein said at least one enhanced buoyancy region is an upper torso region to provide enhanced buoyancy of an upper portion of the user's torso relative to the buoyancy generally provided to the user's torso by the backsheet.

21. (New) The flotation swimsuit of Claim 19, wherein said at least one enhanced buoyancy region is a lower torso region to provide enhanced buoyancy of a lower portion of the user's torso relative to the buoyancy generally provided to the user's torso by the backsheet.

22. (New) The flotation swimsuit of Claim 19, wherein said buoyant material is adapted to provide a predetermined amount of buoyant force responsive to the wearer according to the Coast Guard values for personal flotation devices.